The COMMONWEAL

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The Nazi-Polish Documents

THE GERMAN EXPERTS let loose among the confidential papers of the Polish Ministry of Foreign Affairs have had a field day which has lasted no less than six months. The first result of their efforts, the German White Book, has now appeared. It publishes pre-war conversations with Mr. Bullitt and Mr. Kennedy reported by the Polish Ambassador in Washington to his chief in Warsaw. Its aim is to contribute material for the controversies of our election year. It is of little interest to discuss whether these reports are forged, edited, or authentic. If they are authentic—and Ham Fish say they are—they demonstrate nothing but what is generally known: for instance, that Mr. Bullitt strongly favors the Allied cause. The German thesis is that he and Mr. Kennedy, by their indiscreet indications of the probability of American assistance to Poland and to the Allies, strengthened Polish and Allied resistance to the German claims and in effect caused a war which would not otherwise have taken place. Extreme isolationists here undoubtedly will view with grave concern such evidence of pre-Cromwellian indiscretion. All that is needed, however, to place the matter in its proper perspective is some slight knowledge of what largely constitutes the routine work of diplomats—reporting public opinion by the sampling method. Whatever Mr. Bullitt may have said to his friend Count Potocki, the latter reported it as background information on a sector of American public opinion. He knows his routine and he reported also the views of certain isolationist senators as well known to him as is Mr. Bullitt: but that report the Germans did not publish. None of our Ambassadors can be indiscreet about plans and purposes we have not got. Neither the Poles nor the Allies were misled by diplomatic reports into thinking they really knew that great mystery which is our policy.

Not So Hot

Political Dope Sheet and Racing Form

AMERICAN politics gets to be more and more like horse racing. You can take it or leave it, but an awful lot of people prefer to take it. And those who do are given every opportunity to compile the same sort of statistics about candidates and prospective candidates as Mr. Annenberg daily provides the pony fanciers. We have primaries and Gallup polls and early elections and *Fortune* surveys and previous elections, all of which enable the great American public to talk very learnedly about Mr. A's vote-getting abilities or Mr. B's prospects months before either Mr. A or Mr. B are even nominated for public office; and it's all a lot more fun than the British or French system of running off the whole show in a few exciting weeks with anyone's guess as good as another's. The early April primaries viewed cynically just add a few lines to the accumulated dope about several gentlemen who presumably would like to be President of the United States. Perhaps they should not be taken more seriously than that. Democrats mostly think pretty well of the man they have twice elected to the job. New York Republicans are for a New York candidate. Mr. Dewey is a pretty good two-year-old on a wet day in Wisconsin.

Taking Temperatures

But there is such a thing as being altogether too cynical, and the Republican results actually don't please us a bit, especially the Wisconsin results. It looks as if a lot of people are in fact turning reactionary, for it is difficult to consider Mr. Dewey as anything but that—if he is anything at all. Does the defeat of Mayor Hoan in Milwaukee bear out this suspicion? One can't help thinking so. Mr. Dewey is, in many ways, an enigma. He is so young that we are forced to judge him on his speeches—he's never had an opportunity to act on whatever principles really move him. His political jobs to date have been restricted to prosecuting one banker and a number of racketeers, which he has done with notable success. What does that tell us of how he would act on major national and international problems?

That very fact—the absence of a real record—makes Mr. Dewey an ideal candidate for reaction-

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aries, and a dangerous candidate as well. If he were nominated, which still seems unlikely, he could say anything he thought would get him votes, and there would be no one to gainsay him. He is personable, full of energy, and—judging by his handling of racketeers—not troubled by scruples. He evidently has great appeal for the ladies, particularly for ladies with incomes. All of which is a perfect set-up for the boys in the back room. So his demonstration of popular strength in Wisconsin and New York is disturbing, even though it may mean nothing more than an almost total lack of appeal in his opponents. It somehow seems very much of a piece with the anti-labor, anti-relief, anti-social-legislation attitude which seems to be an unfortunately growing element in the public temper. And that it all to the bad.

The Relief Appropriations Before Congress

THE GOOD-BUSINESS sector of the nation's editors and politicians is concerned that Congress may be "stampeded" into adding a half billion to the 1941 relief bill now undergoing hearings before the House Appropriations Committee. To hear them talk one would think there was danger of lavish expenditures for thousands of indolent Americans already doing very well. What mathematically looks very neat on a national budget sheet may spell tragic injustice and destitution for millions of citizens. It is hard to see how there can be substantial sentiment for further relief curtailment when present payments are woefully inadequate. Aside from the thousands of needy families beyond the pale of any public assistance whatever, a recent survey indicates that in more than half the states of the nation family relief appropriations are less than $15 a month (less than $5 in three states). The gradual paring of WPA workers by one-third has so far outstripped gains in private employment that untold hardships have resulted. In recent months US business has been declining anyway, yet WPA curtailment has gone on. Where are these ex-WPA workers to go? State and local agencies give the inadequate assistance indicated above and are becoming more and more unequal to the task of taking on increasing numbers. There are times when one despairs of American public opinion. Arms appropriations go gaily to new highs year by year with little effective protest. They seem to survive unscathed the periodic waves of budget-balance sentiment. But when more money is needed for the bare sustenance, the physical and moral well-being and the very future of millions of Americans young and old, the cry goes up "politics in an election year." Ignorance of their real plight is somewhat responsible. We suggest that some of these economy people and their families try living on $10 a month.

Economy or Humanity?

The Universality of Science

THE ONENESS of the world—the parallel in things secular of that unity proclaimed by the doctrine of the Mystical Body of Christ—has manifested itself variously in various ages. Medieval Catholic civilization is an outstanding example. But there are other forms of unity besides the corporate unity of society, and one of the most important shows itself today, precisely amid the rending divisions which make so much of the present seem like a nightmare. This is the unity of the scientific and intellectual life. Grotesque efforts have been made in Germany and Russia to nationalize the scholars and laboratories of those countries, and the publicity given those efforts here has perhaps dimmed the American sense of the true proportions of things. It is salutary, therefore, to be reminded of them by the current report of Mr. Raymond Fosdick, president of the Rockefeller Foundation. Mr. Fosdick shows us that European science has the great preeminence still; that American achievement is only a small part of the whole; above all, that the body of scientific thought thrives or suffers together, so that injury to any part of it injures the whole. He illustrates—for example from the splitting of uranium and the discovery of sulfanilimide—how truly international and as one may say, organic, is the cooperation behind most major scientific achievements—what he calls "cross-fertilization between laboratories and groups in widely separated parts of the world." And he warns us by a dozen examples of supreme excellence elsewhere against facilely claiming the power to assume leadership alone. "If Europe freezes into an Arctic night, we shall not easily keep the fires lit in the universities and laboratories of America." These are sobering rather than cheering words; but it must be a matter of pride to every educated American that they were spoken here, by one of us.

Mr. Fosdick Reports

Nanking and Shanghai

FROM THE strict viewpoint of strategy Japan continues to display a remarkable sense of timing. Wang's puppet régime in east China comes into being just as Chiang Kai-shek begins to count on the Russian help released by the ending of the Finnish war; the nomination of five Japanese candidates for the governing board of the International Settlement at Shanghai comes when the hitherto dominant British have their hands tied by the struggle in Europe and the Near East. As in 1932 the United States appears as the lone foreign defender of the status quo. The Japanese should do better in Shanghai than at Nanking. The

End of an Era

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brutality manifested on occasion by their armies and the civilian havoc of their incessant bombing raids have fired great masses of Chinese people to resist as long as a single Japanese soldier remains on Chinese soil. But proverbial Chinese cynicism in political matters and the drawing-power of an offer of peace, food and work for a destitute and war-weary people must not be left out of account. On paper the Wang régime will control the lion's share of the country's resources —90 percent of the railroads and 78 percent of the cotton, for instance, if less than half of the population and less than one-quarter of the territory of China—but it must go some to win over the people within its boundaries and effectively exercise a stranglehold over China's international economy. On the other hand Japanese dominance of the governing board of the International Settlement at Shanghai would mark the end of an era. Whether in the end China is dominated permanently by the Japanese or whether it achieves national independence, one thing is certain: European or American political concessions in the Far East have had their day.

"Time" and "The New World"

TIME (April 1) comments on the appointment to a pastorate of Father Rowan, president, publisher and manager of the *New World*, official weekly of the Chicago Archdiocese. The "reward" (*Time's* irony is explicit) for fourteen years of "liberal, forthright" journalism is presented as being in effect a dismissal. Comparing the Catholic press to a big orchestra, *Time* says: "Last week the *New World* got in beat with the rest of the band." It is of course a fact that under Father Rowan the *New World* refused to admit the Spanish war was essentially a holy war, refused, as did also THE COMMONWEAL, to admit that German and Italian intervention could possibly be motivated by a desire to save Christianity in Spain. And it is also true that this attitude, which seemed and still appears to us reasonable and just, was not the stand generally taken by other American Catholic publications. But to suggest—as *Time* does when it says that the appointment of Father Rowan to parish work was the first clerical appointment made by the newly installed Archbishop of Chicago—that this appointment indicates disapproval by the Archbishop of Father Rowan's political views is unjustifiable guesswork. For whatever discouragement he may have felt in the face of the "articulate and even vociferous minority" which opposed his conception of Catholic journalism, he made public that discouragement while the late Cardinal Mundelein still lived and, as everyone remembers, the Cardinal was not reticent in expressing his abhorrence of fascism. It is obvious also that if the Cardinal had not liked Father Rowan's editorial policy, he would not have refrained from saying so. It is clear that Archbishop Stritch has accepted a resignation springing from events which took place before his arrival in Chicago and before anyone knew that he would be named Archbishop of that archdiocese. It is fair to point this out to *Time,* which should be interested in chronology. We may add that we read the *New World* quite as closely as *Time* does. The immediate future will show whether there is to be an important change in the policy of the paper under the new editorship. Should such a change occur, then we shall see a more solid basis for comment.

Another Vested Interest Wait and See

Scandalous Scandalizing

IT IS OBVIOUSLY essential that the courts should *not* be subjected to interference in the performance of their duties; it is equally obvious that they must be respected and not condemned by the people. If a court believes that it has been injured in either respect, it can bring contempt of court proceedings against whatever person it thinks guilty of such misconduct. In the nature of the case this power of the courts is a great power, and can easily be abused. Judges could, unless their power in the matter be limited, silence all criticism of the courts by instituting contempt proceedings every time a hint of criticism appeared. It is to prevent this very abuse that in many jurisdictions legislation defines narrowly and jealously the nature of contempt and restricts thereby the power of the courts to silence criticism. But it woud seem that in Missouri, and doubtless in other states, no such restrictions exist. The old principle still applies: the courts themselves shall determine what is contempt, and it remains possible for one party to an action—the judge—to sit in judgment on his own case. Precisely this has just happened in St. Louis. The *Post-Dispatch* some weeks ago saw fit to criticize very sharply the judicial actions of Judge Thomas J. Rowe of the Missouri circuit court. He immediately cited the newspaper and three of its employees for contempt, principally on the ground that their criticisms had "scandalized" his court. After a long hearing, Judge Rowe finds the paper and two of its employees guilty, imposes fines on all and jail sentences on the two newspapermen. Of course an appeal was at once taken to the Supreme Court of the state, which is free to act as it pleases in the absence of legislation on the subject. But it looks as though the great common law power of the courts in contempt matters, where it still exists, needs curbing, and perhaps that will be the happy outcome of the *Post-Dispatch* case in Missouri.

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Native Daughter

An indictment of white America by a colored woman.

By **Ellen Tarry**

AS A NEGRO, I have been greatly pleased to note the haste with which the literary world has acclaimed Richard Wright, author of the book "Native Son," as the greatest writer of his race. I rejoice not only because, like Richard Wright, I am a Negro, but because I am also familiar with the obstacles that confront young Negro writers. Even in the literary world, there are those who find it hard to visualize a black Bernard Shaw or a Louisa Alcott with kinky hair. For us, therefore, Richard Wright's triumph is signal.

However it is not Richard Wright's laurels that concern me so greatly. It is rather that in Catholic circles many have lamented the fact that the Negro writer who has arisen as the spokesman for his race should be a communist.

When Mr. Wright addressed a group of book lovers at the 135th Street branch of the New York Public Library on Thursday, March 7, I have been told that the young writer said he was a God-fearing communist. Be that as it may—if the young man said it, it only stresses his *conversion* to communism. I confess, by the way, that this is my first inkling that the communists included God in their ideology. I had also believed that these people *feared* Stalin only.

Yet as an American Mr. Wright is entitled to his own political and religious beliefs. And we must accept, even if regretfully, the fact that Richard Wright, acclaimed America's most powerful Negro writer, is a communist.

But Richard Wright was not born a communist. Existing social, economic and political conditions have made him so. I also doubt, very much, that Mr. Wright was taught to fear God by his communist mentors. We learned about *Him* long before the communists *discovered* us. And it is this inherent belief in God—only—that has kept all of us from turning to the *isms* that accept us as men and women, despite our black skins.

There may be Catholics who will not read "Native Son" because its author is a communist. But, did you ever stop to think that Catholics may be among those who are responsible for some of the conditions that have led Richard Wright and scores of others into the ranks of the reds?

The time has come for Christian America to shed its coat of hypocrisy and admit its sin. Even today, years later, I sicken as I remember the manner in which the Negro's lack of human rights was etched upon my memory. It was soon after I had returned to Alabama from a school conducted by the Sisters of the Blessed Sacrament. While well aware of the fact that I was a Negro, being colored did not seem strange, for so were my friends. True, I knew white people, but they were the nice white people whom my parents served. From them we received nickels, toys and many useful gifts. The atmosphere in our home was such that it gave no hint of the bitterness that corrodes so many black breasts.

There was the time, I'll admit, when I heard talk of a race riot. But being a dramatic child who welcomed any new excitement, I was intrigued by the hushed whispers and drawn shades. Being too young to understand the consequences, I was really disappointed when the scheduled riot failed to take place.

A Ku Klux Klan parade had been another one of the highlights of my childhood. How well I remember my mother taking me from bed in the middle of the night and carrying me in to the parlor. Father, in an old-fashioned nightshirt, with his fists clenched, was standing at a front window. On a couch sat the old woman who nursed my little sister, praying as she clutched the tiny baby to her breast. Outside there was the clatter of horses' hoofs. As the light from a fiery cross, held high by white-robed men on horseback, flashed its warning of destruction to all Catholics, Jews and Negroes, I saw my father open the drawer of a nearby table. The reflection of the light glistened on the steel of a pearl handled revolver. My mother tightened her hold upon my arm. But, childlike, I broke away and pressed my nose against the window pane—the better to see the men in white robes who rode fine horses and carried fiery crosses.

As the last clop-clop died in the distance, there was a dreadful silence. My mother shook the old nurse. "Davie," she said, "you can stop praying now. They've passed us by."

My education

Time passed and there followed years under the watchful eyes of white Sisters. I returned to my parents a young lady. Ready to take my place in the world, the Sisters had said. And on that

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memorable night, when the plight of my race was so clearly explained, one of the neighborhood boys had borrowed a car and called to take me to my first party.

Now the business section of our town had spread until it fringed our neighborhood. This had caused most of our friends to move to other sections of the city. The people who had moved into the houses they left vacant were unknown to us and, on the whole, a pretty motley lot. Even Aunt Lizzie, who had lived in the next house as long as I could remember, had moved to "the hill." And not only did we have a new next-door neighbor, but my mother said she feared they were "a wild bunch."

So on this particular night as I prepared to sally forth to my first party, I was not wholly surprised to see a car, occupied by two white officers of the law, drive alongside an automobile that was parked in front of the next house. But I was anxious to be on my way and called to my escort to come along.

"Wait!" my mother fairly hissed.

And having the sort of mother who meant what she said, I waited.

"Get out of that car!" I heard one of the police call to the two young Negroes who were sitting in the parked auto.

"And get out with your hands in the air!" the other officer instructed, as he leaped from his car with drawn gun.

"You boys got corn [whiskey] in this car and we're gonna find it tonight!" said Officer No. 1.

"Well," asked the second officer, "what you standing there like two dummies for? You *have* got whiskey, *haven't* you?"

"No, Sir!" the Negroes cried in unison, their arms stretched heavenward.

"Well, we'll see!" and the policemen began searching the car.

As we watched from the porch, it seemed to me that they were making that car into a swell job for some junk dealer. Cushions were thrown in the street. Tools were scattered about and boards ripped from the floor. But this was all in vain, for the zealous officers found nothing that bore evidence of any violation of the law.

"Well," one of them admitted, as he pulled out a handkerchief and wiped the sweat from his brow, "we didn't get you tonight, but we'll catch you yet!"

The sight of the white men working so hard —and in vain—must have amused the smaller of the two Negroes (they called him "Shorty"), for he giggled.

"So it tickles you, eh?" said one of the officers. "Well, laugh this off!"

There was a succession of thuds, as the butt of the officer's service revolver cracked against the little Negro's skull again and again. Finally, his form lay crumpled on the aphalt street, as his friend stood helplessly by—his black hands high above his head.

"I reckon this'll teach you not to be so smart next time," laughed the other fiend who wore a policeman's badge, as he walked over to the Negro's prostrate form and began kicking him. His laughter only increased as the Negro feebly groaned.

To me, it had all seemed like a page from some terrible story book. But that Negro's groan struck a note of reality.

"Why you dirty dog!" I screamed, "you're kicking a man who's flat on his back!"

Quickly a hand was clasped over my mouth. "You little simpleton!" my mother muttered, "don't you know that they can do the same thing to you and I can't do a thing about it?"

In that moment, I fell heir to my heritage. I understood the whispers about the race riot. Again I saw white robed figures and heard the clatter of horses' hoofs, as an old Negro woman prayed and clutched a tiny baby to her breast. I understood why my father could not look me in the eye after the Ku Klux had passed by.

And, if that Negro who was kicked, at the point of a gun, as he lay flat on his back, is today a member of any organization pledged to overthrow the brand of order that allows such atrocities—*who is to blame?*

It is readily admitted that Shorty was no civic leader. I doubt if he was affiliated with any movement dedicated to human betterment. Yet he was a young man and might have been any number of things. Out of this same town came the Negro who, I am told, is the vice-president of the Communist Party in America. That is another example of the effect that unwarranted brutality has had upon many Negroes.

NAACP

Most of us are familiar with the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People and the wonderful and constructive work it has done. We black folk enjoy many privileges that might not be ours if there had not been such an organization as the NAACP. Right now, however, I am thinking of one of the cases in which the NAACP was helpless; there is no organization under the sun that has the power to breathe life into the dead. And that is the only solution that would have satisfied those of us who loved Edna D——.

Edna came to our home from a nearby school. The City Federation of Colored Women's Clubs had been contributing to the support and educational expenses of Edna and her sister, Nobie. Neither of these girls were particularly interested in an education. As they were orphans, Edna felt

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she had been dependent upon others too long and left the institution. Nobie, who had lost both arms during early childhood, realized her handicap and remained at the school.

In those days there was a weekly deadline against which I had to write, and before long, Edna became the "head-lady" around our house. Two years went by with this happy arrangement. Then one day we were discussing the idea of my going to New York.

"If I go away, what will you do?" I asked Edna.

"Oh," she replied, "you go ahead. If you go to New York and study, maybe you'll get to be a real good writer. But be sure and send for me just as soon as you get a place for us to stay."

Though the girl was usually slow of comprehension, she had found out that we needed each other. Little did she realize, though, that she was slated for martyrdom.

Like most literary moths, I came on to New York. But life in the big city was not as easy as it had been pictured in the books I had read. Months passed and once in a great while there was a letter from Edna. Each one contained the same question: "Don't you think you'd better hurry and send for me?"

But the winds of winter were cold and there were times when my daily crust of bread was not enough for me, let alone another. So I didn't send for Edna.

Then one day a newspaper clipping fell out of a letter that my mother had sent on by airmail. The clipping was an account of the fatal shooting of Edna D——, a Negro woman [she was barely 18] by Detective ——— for resisting an officer of the law. Once more I had been forced to swallow the bitter brew of America's farcical justice!

Edna, as the story goes, had attended a party. In the course of the evening one of the young women present had drunk a little more than wisely. Then someone lost a pocketbook and, after several heated discussions, the majority of the merrymakers decided that the lady who had tilted her cup so often had also taken the pocketbook. It seems that Edna had, for some reason, decided that someone else took the pocketbook. When the crowd began beating the silly woman, Edna became furious. And a furious Edna was something to reckon with.

Lacking about three inches of being six feet tall, with a frame well covered with flesh, Edna looked much like some African princess who had never been contaminated by the various bloods that race through the veins of most of us.

Though slow to comprehend, right and wrong dictated the course of Edna's actions. When she saw the crowd beating a woman she believed to be innocent, she went to the aid of the unfortunate woman and, single handed, subdued the rest of the crowd. Innately kind, with more than her share of maternal instinct, Edna then went home taking the woman with her.

Of course the people at the party were very angry with Edna. And they decided to play a trick on her that they knew would give the girl a good scare. They called police headquarters and told the officers to go to "913 North 16 Street. There's a bad Negro woman there."

In a few moments the police walked into Edna's room. She had put the intoxicated woman to bed and was changing her shoes. You see Edna persisted in wearing shoes that were smaller than her generously proportioned feet. Her first act upon entering the house was naturally to seek comfort for her feet.

And so when the officers said, "Put up your hands!" Edna, intent upon changing her shoes and always slow to comprehend, simply looked up to see what was happening. That was the resistance that caused an officer of the law to shoot Edna.

There was an investigation, all the findings of which I do not know. I do know, however, that Edna's slayer kept his job and received no legal punishment.

Meanwhile, I prayed and waited. If this man escaped all punishment, I reasoned, surely I was following the wrong path.

Still I prayed and waited. Time passed. Then last year another clipping came in a letter I received. It was an account of the death of the man who had slain Edna D——. He met his death at the hand of another culprit who had resisted arrest. "Vengeance is mine!" saith the Lord. *He* had charted my course.

These unfortunate and inappropriate experiences have been recorded here not to spread hatred, stir up sectional strife or arouse ill feeling. Neither have they been easy to share with you. But the cause for which I have written about these experiences is the salvation of millions of souls, and any suffering these memories might have recalled is only a small part of the contribution hundreds of us are ready to pay so that our more handicapped and less articulate brothers may enjoy the inherited rights of every man created to the image and likeness of God.

I would not have you believe that I have sought to paint a picture of a barbarous South. Indeed not! for I love my home and some of my most highly esteemed friends are white. But my nice white friends, who are thoroughly familiar with these conditions, allow public officers to brutalize and murder helpless and inarticulate Negroes. It is this silence of kindly intentioned America that is causing Negroes everywhere to demand that those who call themselves our friends take their stand and let the world know about it.

Without a doubt Mr. Wright is recording the harvest of hate that White America has, perhaps unwittingly, sown. Can you honestly blame him?

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Italian Impressions

Why the author must write as if he had never had any.

By C. G. Paulding

A MAN LEAVING a foreign country in which he has lived for years bears with him the obligation to keep faith with the friends he has left there. In the case of a country like France this implies that there be no misrepresentation of the diversified opinions and aims of the French; in the case of a fascist country it means that a man may not quote, identify, represent with any reality the moral or intellectual existence of any of his friends, whether they are fascist or not, priests or laymen, rich or poor, known or not yet known to the police. All the certainties I have that Italians are living, that the conscience of Italians is alive, must be silenced. I am bound by the silence which binds Italians: the silence that is known to men in Germany, in Russia, in Spain or in Italy—the silence of fear.

I can give no proof of anything, no reality to anything. I could speak of the Church in Rome or of churches all over Italy, or of archeology, or of the peasants and how they dress: I could describe the countryside, the hill towns, ports, roads, cities, Venice, Naples. I could talk of Cavour and Mazzini but I could not tell who still lives today in Rome with the men of the Risorgimento as his models: I could write about the poets but I could not tell who told me to read Carducci's prose. I could talk about anything save the relation of the Italian people, as individuals, to the fascist régime. I could not tell what my friends feared, hoped and said, who received me in their homes, and the mother, when the ballilas came home from drill said the masquerade is over get into your proper clothes before I will kiss you.

If I could talk to all the men and women whom I see now so far away and hear now as if they were with me in the room, if I could tell about the August heat and the sidewalk cafés in Rome and how we looked at the next table before we talked. If I could tell about the young fascist inspectors and my going with them to a village near Rome where the men stood in a silent group in the village square watching us and the women stayed in their houses and the village schoolmistress paraded the children and they sang Giovinezza and the young fascist inspectors and I stood there embarrassed. If I could tell what I saw in Italy during six years, the good with the bad, but tell how and where and with what people I was and what they said when the troops marched through the streets on the way to the station, to the train, to the boats which were taking them to Ethiopia. But tell also how thousands and thousands of Italians—white-collar and factory workers, villagers and city shop keepers—are able to see their country for the first time and their cities traveling at a price they can afford to pay on the special week-end trains; and when they get to their destination they are protected from exploitation by fixed and reasonable prices in the restaurants. And tell also how peasants who have been, as far as they or their fathers remember, tenants or transient farm labor now own land thanks to the agricultural policy which is the finest thing the régime has accomplished. Tell how in spite of regimentation the poor everywhere in Italy are learning through fascism that government is not just an instrument for the rich. And tell how the worker has security and paid vacations and facilities for recreation. If everything I told had the place the names the talk the courage the despair the indifference the love the jokes the cruelty the cynicism that were there in reality, then what I wrote would break through the silence, would break down the false unity of the Italian country. The living people and their protests would shatter a dead unity imposed by a régime and by a police. There would be living fascists and not just the Party, living people who opposed the régime and not just the Opposition.

If I dared write as if I had lived in Italy, for one thing, I would be able to get away from theoretical analysis of the relations between the Church and the Party. I would tell of a congress of fascist intellectuals who met to plan the direction of labor relations, and how three hundred men sat in a building in Rome listening to one speaker after another, interrupting, arguing, alive to every inference, on their toes—until a fascist with an officially Catholic label rose to give I know not what theological blessing to the corporations and before he was able to start there was a great shuffling of people out of doors to the gardens from which one looked out over Rome, and some laughter, and there were left in the room perhaps twelve men to listen. That is how much the fascist intellectual wants to be blessed. I would tell how the Catholic students came out of their university club and the boys beat them up while rows of

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policemen looked on. If I were criminal enough to compromise my friends I would explain how a man may sacrifice himself but not his wife and not his children's career, and what a look there was on one man's face as he spoke to me the day he signed the teacher's oath of allegiance to the Party.

The unstable equilibrium within the fascist party would appear with its elements in action, the living tendency toward revolution explicit, the deviation of that tendency into nationalism explicit, and the men who made up the Party, the hypocrites, but the pure too—and they are the majority—would be there as they live and as they speak. The rigidity of fascism would be relegated to the true position it fills, that of a façade imposed by the police forces of a tyranny which only appears mild in contrast to that of similar systems in other countries. Behind that façade life continues indifferent, impassioned and moving no one can tell toward what end. Life made up principally of the lives of men who are in and of the régime and who are loyal to it because, as the de facto government of their country, it absorbs their private loyalties (to the army, to the fields, to their families). Because also they seek to influence it in the direction of their diverse ideals. The majority of fascists are not hypocrites or grafters or tyrants; the majority are not even arrogant. For the simple reason that a majority of fascists means now, after all these years, a majority of Italians, and these Italians, reaching maturity under fascist rule, remain subject to influences, not excluding the Catholic, which existed before fascism and which are more powerful. They also retain free will. The best of Italian youth has been brought up under the fascist régime. Italian idealism and energy is working now, as a fact, within that régime: that energy and devotion eventually will control and transform it. Life within the Party is not separated as greatly as one would imagine from life outside the Party. The intelligence of men in and outside any room faces the same problems of existence. And when men are brought into a totalitarian formation it is within that formation that the diversity of life reappears.

It is among fascists that the conviction will arise that fascism is not even a bad way out from the problems of an ending epoch, not only a false promise of a generous communal life, but that it proceeds directly from the uncontrolled and exasperated individualism it pretends to have abolished. It transfers all the private errors to the State and the State continues them.

I can call no witnesses, for when one leaves the plane where words such as fascist and anti-fascist supersede the human beings who, in and out of the party, are thinking and planning with a courage unknown to us who live in freedom, the enduring reality of fascism is fear.

The French Revelation

By WARREN RAMSEY

RAFE WALKED across the Pyrenees broke, after the International Brigade was disbanded, and hitchhiked up toward Paris. He was disreputable looking, long-haired, wearing the torn, dirty trench-coat that had really been in the trenches, so travel was slow. It took him two weeks to make Paris.

He was a very primitive creature, governed by the day and night, the weather, the dispositions of people he begged from. In the queer, detached drunkenness of hunger he listened to his own voice like another person talking. It told, in a dry, often humorous style, little stories about the disasters of his life. It sounded like someone reading rather huriedly off the printed page. Rafe explained it by the fact that he had not read any books for so long. Some automatic part was meeting that appetite for print. Rafe smiled from force of recognition, or wept, or looked meditatively off over the flat countryside, according to the moods of the stories. In more rational moments after a meal he could never remember the neat masses, the lucid phrases. He remembered the sound of the voice, though, hard and sharp like a surgical tool puncturing his great, swollen loneliness.

"I know I was right but I don't know why I was right," Rafe would sentimentalize after a story.

That was a profound judgment. Because superficially there was not much right about his life since he was fifteen. . . .

In college he had chosen to learn something rather than make grades. His thoughts' edge had at first tickled, without cutting, his teachers. Rafe was too young, as uncomfortable about his originality as everybody else was. But he refused to be corrected by ridicule, and his professors got angrier and angrier. Only Rafe's cowardice, playing up to his major professor at a certain last minute, kept him from being kicked out of school.

His father propped him up while he went to steadily worse jobs and tried to be a writer. He married, and his wife collapsed on the bed every night after supper, dead tired from the office work that supported them. Rafe would come and stand over her, wanting to come closer. But pity tore his face and shame welled him away from this pretty, unreasonably devoted girl. Her head and arms were thrown back, as in pictures of people being shot, because she had been bunched over a typewriter for nine hours. She was sleeping as she had fallen, in her clothes; she would get up at six o'clock to iron them, for she kept herself very neat in poverty. Rafe would go back to where the lamp splashed light over his mess of contradictory books: Marx, Engels, Lenin, the Greek New Testament, which he seldom read but kept in a conspicuous place. He was looking for, more than the ideas, some hardness of spirit, some loss of sensitivity, which would give him the freedom to act in this world. He escaped to the Spanish War. . . .

LYING ON his bed in Paris afterwards, the war was a kind of soggy mass from which no active principle emerged. Rafe did not want that mass to dry out and catch fire, yet. He had ruined most of his significant experiences by writing about them. The war could wait a while.

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What he wanted now, desperately, was to know something. He felt that France could either fit ideas to his feelings or make him admit that his feelings had been wrong all the time. France had done that for many men no more anxious than he.

Slowly, with great effort, he began to learn French. His thought processes were sad and heavy with human experience, inept for the light, deft acts of learning.

Two weeks after he got to Paris the embassy said, "We'll pay your way home if you leave day after tomorrow. Not afterward."

It was Sunday afternoon in early October when Rafe walked along the Boulevard St. Michel, to decide. The contrary streams of strollers flowed quietly, except for the murmur of heels knocking the concrete, under the sidewalk trees, the leaves still poised and green with summer life. The white city faces, so different from those he had been seeing, were framed by the fuliginous black of Sunday clothes. Rafe did not care much, yet, for the Boulevard St. Michel, these people dodging in and out of cafés and turning in their tracks to pursue the other sex. He had come to the Boulevard St. Michel because he did not like it, to make the case against Paris as serious as possible.

But the Boulevard St. Michel was like the sinful world from which one escapes to the ideal. His heart was away to the "poorer quarters," the workmen's quarters, of Paris, which he loved already; so full of simple, cheerful people doing their work or amusing themselves justly afterwards, so solidly built, so sweet with a sense of solid life. Those poorer quarters—black-dressed women bring long, naked loaves out of bakeries, blue-bereted, cylinder-bodied little men stepping out of bars, the vivid markets cheating you in exotic ways—were the most living thing Rafe had seen yet. He thought he would stick around till he absorbed a little of that. For a poor man, which was all he could hope to be, the difference between French and American life seemed to be about the difference between French and American bread.

The dangers of expatriation, long or short term, were pretty clear: the old story ever new of doing without money, throwing down the bourgeois in him, and, if he turned out to be more bourgeois than artist, ruining his self-respect. The tendency, for an American abroad, to go soft because he no longer has to fight his environment, to lose the harsh energy of resistence and be unable to use the softer European energies. Superficiality, living *out of* one country and not living deeply enough into another. And as Rafe's mother said, with the shrewd family analysis judging from all standpoints except the most important, it was "not good for Rafe to be too much alone"; he would be much alone.

If he was weak, he would become another continental bum, another sad-eyed, derelict American folded over bars and the tables of the American Library, without even enough guts to study French.

If he was strong, he might live in the redeeming joy of always learning something new.

Rafe turned off the Boulevard St. Michel toward the poorer quarter where he lived, smiling in all gentleness.

He had written no letters and almost forgotten about America when he got a short, bitter note from his father, all of whose hopes he had disappointed. This was the last money, his father said.

Even after Rafe had got a haircut and been wearing normal clothes for some time there was something rough about him. His huge, tragic face was a strange sight in the cafés of the Boulevard St. Michel, among the empty, unformed faces of students. The two deep wrinkles which put his mouth in parentheses were like scars.

A COMRADE, going to the United States, left him a bicycle. Rafe found a cheap place to live in the suburb of Robinson, ten kilometers from Paris. He thought that the pedaling back and forth would be good for him, better than sitting in Paris all day and all night and getting headaches.

As long as the fall weather lasted it was fun coasting down to Paris over the chunky, not-too-bumpy paving stones—those little, square paving stones laid so beautifully in round patterns. The blood was red in his face and his hands were a little slow with chill when he stopped at the library doors. The uphill ride at night was hard but it made him feel good.

Coming home at night, there was one long hill that he had to walk up. Toward the top the road curved suddenly, and the gaps between the roadside trees filled with valley lights.

He was reading Flaubert's "A Simple Soul" then. And he never came around the bend at the top of the hill without thinking of the place where Felicity, after being whipped unconscious by the stagecoach driver, goes on, carrying her dead parrot.

"When she got to the summit of Ecquemauville she saw the lights of Honfleur glittering in the night like a quantity of stars; the sea, further off, spread out confusedly. Then a faintness stopped her; and the wretchedness of her childhood, the disappointment of first love, the depart of her nephew, the death of Virginia, like the floods of a tide, returned all at once, and, mounting to her throat, choked her."

Thus imperfectly he translated the perfect prose, whose cadences were like the floods of a tide, of tears. The passage meant almost everything to him those nights on the hill, in the rainy or starry weather, looking out between the clipped suburban treetops. All mankind, even himself, choked like Felicity, reliving the bad times. And there it was written down, once for all.

Rafe knew by this time that he was a simple soul, not nearly as complicated as once, in a barbarous corner of America, he had used to think he was. He only wished he had been simple enough for it to mean something, like the servant Felicity.

Above the house lights, the street lights sown through the valley, an immense, gentle joy grew from deep in Rafe. He did not know, but he thought he was beginning to understand what "forgetfulness of the self" might mean. It was the coldest Paris winter in thirty years.

Rafe knew only one warm spot in Paris, the Mazarine Library beside the Seine. Unhappily, it closed at 5 p. m. But he tried to get there an hour and a half or two hours before closing time every day.

He couldn't afford gloves and smeared olive oil on his hands to make the trip to town. He wiped his fingers before touching the library books. But he left the oil on the back of his hands, because there was the ride home, and they shone brick red in the white light of the reading lamp. Occasionally he would glance up at girls around the green-topped tables and, with an involuntary jerk, try to hide the threadbare ends of his suitcoat sleeves. The old doorkeeper must have wondered why the American

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always entered and left with his overcoat folded in a tight packet; it was torn in so many places that it had to be folded tight.

He read Rimbaud, Verlaine, without much knowledge of French, with his forces focused to the finest point to understand. This literature was the bone and muscle of his life, sustaining him as his own feeble scribbling was no longer able to. And he did not fail, of course, to think of himself sometimes as another Accursed Poet, to be justified some day for all his troubles.

Towards closing time he would look nervously out the window, where, as it were weighted by the black air, the Seine flowed dense, gleaming, bearing, as Verlaine suggested, its heavy load of dead dreams, disillusions, corpses.

Across the river on the Right Bank lay the brightly lighted evening life of people who walked freely in good overcoats. Sometimes Rafe had to cross over, for his mail at the American Express. He walked through the department stores because they were warm, holding his left arm stiff to hide that bad hole above the pocket.

The coldest day of all, his hands were like rotten meat on iron hooks when he had got from his lodgings to the walls of Paris. He stopped at a workingman's fifteen-cent store on the Avenue d'Orléans, thinking he might be able to afford some gloves. The shoddy specimens were heaped in cartons on the counters. Thick wives of laborers, steaming, stray ends of hair sticking out of stocking caps, towels, worn over their mouths outdoors, now lassoing their necks, pulled glove after glove over their broad paws, finally paid for a pair and waddled out into the terrible street. The paying part was what Rafe couldn't do. The gloves were all too expensive. Angry, doubtful of his life from its first to its last day, envious of these rich people, he stood in a corner of the muddy floor, feeling the sudden draughts from the doors like blows.

In front of the markets on the Avenue dOrléans, where he bought his food, were braziers of burning charcoal on tripods. Like the grocery help who worked the outdoor counters, he plunged his hands in the intense heat, and they melted, the fingers began moving unctuously, as suddenly as snow over fire.

ABOUT ONCE A WEEK Rafe did not go to Paris, because he felt the cold exceptionally or because he wanted to get something done rather than make sets against the elements all day. Those days he sat with his back grooved into the radiator, there in the big ground-floor dining room at Robinson, reading Flaubert over the ruins of his meals.

There was a sense of being attacked from all sides. Two walls were nothing but windows, and the livid winter daylight invaded the room. In the third wall two ample glass doors, latchless, let in draughts from the hall. On the fourth side lay the kitchen and the landlord's aggressive curiosity.

Rafe's main sin was gluttony. Eating was his only pleasure; revengefully, he overdid it. He woke up very early, hungry, and tramped down to the grocery store through the still dark morning. Often he had to wait until the intricate shutters were folded up and the milk cans rolled inside. The grocer was a thin man with a gray wrapper so extensive that only his white hands, black feet and sullen face stuck out. In three months' dealings he never said a sympathetic word to the stranger; he always short-measured and tried to short-change him, however. The grocer incarnated, for Rafe, the meager gray life of the suburbs, neither town nor country and with the disadvantages of both. Rafe carried away, with his pan of ice-bound milk, the festering anger of the broke, who must, or who feel that they must, be cautious.

One February breakfast-time Rafe was reading Flaubert's "Legend of Saint Julien the Hospitaller."

He had read Flaubert, englished, when he was fifteen, in that passionate communion where reader goes to writer and writer comes to reader. In ten years Rafe had traveled quite a little in the realms of gold and left all his other adolescent adorations. But strangely, the author that he knew he should admire the most then was the author he did admire the most now. When he came to a phrase even more beautiful, an observation even more penetrating, than usual, he knew how lonely love is. He wanted to share these beauties and there was nobody to share them with.

The intelligent French people he talked to did not care much for Flaubert, finding him too dry, too cold. . . . Or take, on a plane well below the intelligent, Monsieur Lala, the biggest emperor of popular criticism and so very, very French. M. Lala was like a noisy talking picture of Balzac—the black mane, the snub nose, the thickset-ness. He blustered, vulgarizing the good ideas of fifteen years ago, at meetings and over Radio-Paris. And he had no time at all, between Balzac and Stendhal, for poor Flaubert.

Only a few Americans, whom Rafe was not likely to meet, seemed to realize that Flaubert built such "dry," "cold" restraining walls because his emotion was so powerful, that true emotion does not spread itself out but keeps itself in. Flaubert's fate: to be most sympathized with by foreigners who could never fully understand the language he perfected.

"Flaubert" had trained the lush tangle of Rafe's adolescent aspirations as they would not have gone otherwise. "Flaubert," fixation of adolescence, word, cry with mystical content across his whole reasonable and unreasonable life since. Coming to Flaubert, the real French Flaubert, now, was like coming to the center of the fire. And Rafe felt with a pang that it had not been so wrong after all, that discipline of his. For ten years he had tied himself to a boyishly misunderstood ideal of austerity. He had spoiled his prose style for all practical purposes. To say nothing of having, to quote his mother's last letter, "ruined his life." But maybe it had not been a meaningless error.

Rafe had found the heraldic passages of "Saint Julien" a little dull, if only because he had had to thumb the dictionary so much. But now he was coming to the latter part, Julien's prosperity, marriage, parricide, penance. Rafe's mind accelerated like a machine covering this supernatural, beloved country. The language difficulty disappeared. He understood naturally, as a child or a business man understands, without thinking of the language.

The baker's girl, slender loaves like neat, split stove-wood piled in her arms, crossed the room with a shy good-morning. For once Rafe was not gluttonous. He did not stuff down an unneeded loaf of bread.

The landlord cruised in. Rafe was supposed to wash his dishes right after using them. It was now hours after breakfast.

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The landlord was very stoop-shouldered. Long arms descended in long curves to his pockets. His nose was apparently boneless. A meaningless nervous smile was fixed over the whole shapelessness.

Undeclared war existed between the two men. They always said hello, and sometimes, of evenings, the landlord's wife smiling and neutral between them, even conversed. But the landlord was fundamentally meddlesome and Rafe was fundamentally resentful.

The landlord prowled the dining-room, looking for a place to attack. Rafe gave no battle this morning. The hostile current had nowhere to flow to. After steaming up a window with his breath, the landlord gave a wide, circular look and withdrew into his warm kitchen.

The great beauty of the holy story grew. It pushed through the cold, the dirty dishes, the tense tissues of menial worries enwrapping Rafe. It seemed to Rafe that his was the least likely of all situations for holy beauty to visit, a vulgar misery with no suspicion of greatness.

THE LEPER'S "shoulders, his breast, his meager arms disappeared under layers of scaly postules. Enormous wrinkles plowed his face. Like a skeleton, he had a hole in the place of a nose; and his bluish lips let out a breath thick as a fog, and nauseous."

Julien had left, in his miserable cabin by the river, only the things necessary for the barest life. Steadily, deliberately, the Leper took away those materials of pride: Julien's old piece of bacon and crusts of black bread, the water (which turned to wine) in the pitcher, his fuel, his bed. At last,

"The Leper closed his eyelids.

" 'It's like ice in my bones! Come close to me!'

"And Julien . . . lay down on the dead leaves, close to him, side by side.

"The Leper turned his head.

" 'Undress yourself, so I can have the warmth of your body.'

"Julien took off his clothes; then, naked as the day he was born, he lay down in the bed again; and he felt against his thigh the Leper's skin, colder than a snake and rough as a file.

"Julien tried to comfort him; and he answered, panting:

" 'Oh, I'm going to die! . . . Come close to me, warm me up! No, not with your hands! With your whole body!'

"Julien stretched himself out completely over the Leper, mouth against mouth, breast to breast.

"Then the Leper embraced him; and his eyes were suddenly as clear as stars; his hair lengthened out like the rays of the sun; the breath of his nostrils was as sweet as roses; a smoke of incense rose from the fireplace, the waves sang. Meanwhile a fulness of delights, a superhuman joy came down like a flood into the soul of Julien, who had fainted; and he whose arms held Julien tight grew and grew, till his head and feet touched the two walls of the cabin. The roof flew off, the firmament unfolded; . . . and Julien mounted toward the blue spaces face to face with Our Lord Jesus, who carried him away to Heaven."

THE WEEPING became uncontrollable, and Rafe knew he could not do that in this big room, exposed to people. He pushed through the loose doors and climbed the sounding stairs to his own room, in the cold.

On the black cover of his cot he cried through his fingers, "Oh my God! Oh my God!" And at last, "It is time."

Was it insincere, was it literary that his conversion should come, after so many misdirections and misfires, through a work of art? Above his hysterical emotions some colder faculty answered no. He had spent his hardest, sincerest hours, in the years when he had known nothing about religion, looking for artistic beauty. That effort had worn the deepest rut in his existence. Inevitably he was guided by it. He had to find truth through beauty. . . . And the *Nunc Dimittis,* the Song of Simeon, would soften him when the Mass itself failed to.

Rafe had been to the English Church out near the Étoile, shiftily approaching what he did not dare take. He averted his face from the mysteries he longed for. He despised the casual, irreligious people, so at ease in Zion; and he knew that his own feeling of superiority was bad. Then the old communist argument against religion as the opium of the people was hard to answer; if he joined the Church now maybe he would be putting himself to sleep among his troubles, like an old tramp along his vermin, instead of trying to get rid of them.

Once, after the service, when Rafe had forgotten why he had come to church and was watching the expensive, smiling people file out, the priest had looked him in the face and said,

"If there's anything I can do let me know."

Startled, ashamed of being caught in a vital spot, Rafe had left the church quickly.

He could see the priest's face now, beyond the frigid black and white of his own room, colored warm red by the church lights. It was a plump, firm face. Plump glasses—with perfectly round, black rims, as in pictures of medieval doctors—obscured the kindness of the eyes. There was a sweetness, an unofficial reality of emotion in the priest's voice saying the services. That was the first priest Rafe had ever really liked.

Yes, he would go to that priest in that church. In spite of the silly people to whom church-going was part of Sunday equilibrium, like a good meal. Though these people spoke English, which Rafe did not want to speak while he was learning French; he would have to hear about God and talk to God in English, those things were too deep for a foreign language. Though the church was out of his way, and he would have to cross Paris with freezing hands and leave his bicycle on the church porch for the rich people to see. Though he had hardly enough clothes to stand in, and would always be an intruder among those bourgeois embarrassed by his poverty as by his zeal.

There were so many reasons for not going to that priest, that church. Plausible and perfectly unimportant reasons, like those for running back to the United States four months ago, before this winter began.

Rafe was sinking back rapidly to the world of ordinary fears, curiosities. His face dried stiff with salt. He looked in the dark, crazily uneven mirror. The dilated nose thinned down. The flesh settled gray and harsh around the glistening, blood-streaked eyeballs.

But something was not sinking back. His decision was fixed somewhere above the ebb of his emotions. It was detached from him now, but it was made of his flesh and tears, and he would not be able to let it go.

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Views & Reviews

BY MICHAEL WILLIAMS

MY RECENT correspondence with Mr. John Chamberlain in this column, in which he explained how I had been (unintentionally) unfair to him through the use of an unverified quotation from one of his articles—taken from a third writer upon whom I had thoughtlessly relied—caused him, most kindly, to send me a copy of his new book, "The American Stakes," as he thought that I might be particularly interested in what he say to say in its pages about the economic ideas of two Catholic writers, Chesterton and Belloc. Mr. Chamberlain's book was briefly yet, I think, competently reviewed in THE COMMONWEAL (March 29), by John C. Cort, but its interest and importance are quite sufficient to justify further discussion. It is a book that deserves much thoughtful study among Catholic readers of economic and political and, indeed, of philosophical debates on our pressing contemporary problems, domestic and international; for it is one of several recent works by writers of great influence who have begun to become aware of Catholic sources and authorities in such fields and who have taken at least a few, if very tentative and hesitant, steps on a road that if firmly and frankly followed might lead them to a central forum in which all theories and ideas and experiences relative to mankind's common social problems might be openly canvassed on their merits.

Whenever I read serious studies of such problems written by Catholic authors, I invariably find that, whatever the field of discussion, the Catholics are well acquainted not only with Catholic work but also with both the contemporary and classical non-Catholic authors and schools of thought relating to the subject in hand. If a Catholic writer of any competence whatever should discuss philosophy, for example, you certainly would not find him blandly ignoring one great tract of the general theme —let us say the work of Kant and the followers and critics of Kant—as you find so many modern writers in the non-Catholic schools ignoring the philosophers and philosophical schools associated with the Church—as Will Durant ignored Scholasticism, for example, in his "Story of Philosophy." When you read a Catholic writer on economics, say Dr. John A. Ryan or Professor Fanfani, you find him, as a matter of course, completely literate and up-to-date in his knowledge of all the important movements and people in his field. But until quite recently except for a few authors, non-Catholic writers on economics displayed a complete ignorance or complete indifference, whichever it may be, to the ideas and movements in economic thought associated with Catholicism. Fortunately the situation is changing, and since that is the case it might be well for our Catholic universities and intellectual societies and our press to consider ways and means for assisting the process of making the riches of Catholic thought and experience more available to the general intellectual world.

Particularly would it be well, it seems to me, if practical measures were taken to bring to the world a fuller flow of information concerning what the Church itself, through its official teachers, its Popes and its Councils, have taught in a form that would have contemporary value; a sort of translation out of the strictly technical style of theological and doctrinal utterance into living language, yet, of course, scrupulously accurate in its new rendering of the unchanging doctrine itself. Undoubtedly a most difficult task; yet it ought to be well within the competence of our scholars and instructed writers.

In Mr. Chamberlain's general position, as Mr. Cort pointed out in his review, there is a real resemblance to economic ideas taught by the Church. Yet except for the vague outlines given by him of the distributist program drawn up by Belloc and Chesterton, there is nothing said by him to indicate any acquaintance with the fundamental doctrine expounded by Leo XIII and Pius XI and Pius XII. Yet Mr. Chamberlain obviously feels, even if as yet he does not explicitly think, that economic reform or change must needs find some sort of doctrine to rest its assumptions upon and to build some logically reasonable theory. Indeed he rests his own book upon an assumption of that sort. He opens his first chapter with the statement that "no book upon politics can be worth its salt if the author lacks a clear notion of the origins and evolving nature of the State." He follows up this statement by declaring that "the origin of State power [is] brutally unashamed force." Two writers, Murray Godwin and Franz Oppenheimer, are given as his authorities. The former paints the entire picture in terms of our contemporary rackets. The latter, according to Mr. Chamberlain, "clinches the point with a great show of learning." In other words the same phenomenon appears in the pages of this youthful, strictly up-to-date American writer that has been so tediously familiar in the writings of practically all modern liberals and rebels and radicals who in their swing away from any traffic with the authority of the Church set up this or that individual authority in the place of the corporate authority of the Church, with its millenium of tradition and its stores of wisdom derived from the living experiences of hundreds of nations and races.

Mr. Cort very shrewdly points out that Mr. Chamberlain's acceptance of the Murray Godwin-Oppenheimer theory of the States comes dangerously near to committing him to a belief in sheer anarchy as the force that produced and maintains the State. Yet one of the great pioneers of modern anarchism, Proudhon, in his "Confessions of a Revolutionist" said that "it is surprising to observe how constantly we find that all our political questions involve theological ones." Granting that some degree of force is beyond question required if not in the formation yet certainly in the upholding of the institutions of any State, whether we call it police force or military strength, or farm out the job of maintaining order, as another anarchist, Benjamin Tucker, advocated, to private hands, the great question of the right to do so, or the wrong of doing or not doing so, still remains to be settled. Which is why, as Proudhon discovered, and as Cardinal Manning remarked to Hilaire Belloc, bringing both anarchist and

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priest to an agreement for once, at bottom all political questions are theological. Well, let us hope that Mr. Chamberlain and all the other zealous social reformers of our troubled age, having themselves began to re-discover this old truth, will turn again to the institution that has always lived by it and through it and draw from that source much which they may not care to accept as theology, at least for their own theological purposes, but which is mankind's common sense, the wisdom by which it may live in peace.

Communications

THE LANGUAGE OF THE GAEL

New York City.

TO the Editors: Back in the Old Parish as youngsters we all knew very well that if, possibly, there could be an eighth deadly sin it was this: to talk back to a Sister. Our Holy Father we knew was merely infallible speaking *ex cathedra* on matters of faith and morals; but by the same token we as readily granted a Sister impeccability along with infallibility. It was proved to us time and again by the infallible way Sister Brigid had of catching us in our slightest peccadillos during Catechism class.

Sister Bra-heed we called her in the soft lilting music of the *Teanga na h-Eireann,* the tongue of Ireland. And as Bra-heed is so much more enchantingly lovely to say than the coarse, harsh English Bridget, so is *tee-onga na airunn* than *languages of Ireland* as the Sassenach would say it. For truth to tell, unlike Sister Julie the only harsh word I find in all Gaelic is rightfully cold and hard and bitter tasting: Sassenach, . . . Englishman.

Debunking has been the fashion of the age and the striving in literature has been for a realism that is far from reticent. But that a Sister . . . and not of the order of the Mystic Rose . . . a Sister with the "good drop in her" on the mother's side, should contemn the sighing, laughing tonal beauty of Gaelic is much too much to be borne. Mavrone, mavrone, what is the world coming to?

It is only with a great effort entirely that it is possible to hold on to Sister Brigid's teachings of the spiritual works of mercy; but surely they fit the case, and make talking back to a Sister no sin. For when it comes to downright heresy, esthetical, poetical and phonetical, surely it is a duty to admonish the sinner, instruct the ignorant, counsel the doubtful, comfort the sorrowful, bear the wrong patiently, forgive the injury, and pray for the sorrowing, doubtful, ignorant sinner's repentance.

Far be it from me to say anything about Deirdre of the Sorrows and the cruel fate she put upon the sons of Usnach, but I do think her unholy queer company for a nun, and holding out no ideal at all for the learning of the sweet tongue of the Eireann. Devorgilla whose sin let the Sassenach into the four lovely fields would be another one of the same kilter. It would be just as well to read about them in the *Beurla* (the English) in Stephens, Lady Gregory, Yeats and Synge. Sister Julie writes Syng, but then she writes *failte* as *fealhte* in the phrase *an hundred thousand welcomes,* so I do not really think she paid close attention to her lessons. Never yet from potman to prelate have I heard anyone speak of Eire as Eye-re; nor can I even find it in my heart to believe that Sister Julie speaks of *Jane I-re.* When she writes the name of the dear land phonetically as A-zha not Ay-re, it is enough to make the angels weep. Weep they always do on Saint Patrick's Day for the sorrows of Eire and the rain of their tears always spoils the parade; but surely Sister Julie knows that Gaelic is the tongue they speak among themselves from the mighty archangels down to the tiniest lisping cherubim.

Every Irishman knows that when a baby smiles in his slumber it is because the angels are whispering into his ear. It is an Irish tradition, and it goes without saying that it is not Toltec or Sanskrit the angels are using. Gaelic it is, of course, the single tongue soft and zephyr-like enough for infants and angels.

Nor can I help but feel that Sheila (Shay-la) in the Gaelic is much more musical than Julie (Djew-lee) in the speech of the Sassenach. Saint Padraic pray for an erring child. DORAN HURLEY.

QUESTIONS FOR A NON-COMBATANT

Pittsburgh, Pa.

TO the Editors: With one point of your editorial comment on Monsignor Ryan's article, "Confusion about the War," I am in complete accord. I think it would be splendid to find some other method than war by which Hitlerism might be abolished. But I have a corroding suspicion that while we are trying to find that method, Hitler will go on grimly kicking the stuffing out of Europe.

And if he kicks the stuffing out of England and France, as he already has out of Czechoslovakia and Poland, I am afraid that we will find ourselves troubled by a regret. On that unhappy day I think we will wish that non-combatants had not paused to wonder whether all of the Allied war aims were good, but had contented themselves with the reflection that all of Nazism was bad.

Chesterton said that the time to ward off a blow was while it was still in the air. With three European countries already in bloody ruins I am not sure that we can consider that the blow now menacing civilization is still in the air, but we at least are still on our feet. While we are so happily situated I think we should do something less frivolous than to debate whether we want an Allied "victory" or an allied "triumph." ROSEMARY CASEY.

Rosemary Casey seems to question whether there is a genuine difference betwen "victory" and "triumph." A boxer can win a "victory" on points; he can only "triumph" through a knockout. There lies the difference. "Victory" means the obtaining of a just peace, but it does not determine the means for reaching that end. It does not exclude the possibility that pressure without "triumph" may cause the collapse of the totalitarian systems, thereby freeing the will of the peoples involved to accept the conditions of a just international life. By the same token, the absence of "triumph" may preserve the victors from vindictiveness and thus prepare them also to accept the sacrifices necessary to a just international life. The word "triumph" where such suffering is involved is a word we cannot admit. The Editors.

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The Stage & Screen

Lady In Waiting

MISS GLADYS GEORGE is back again, and we can throw up our caps for that at least. Her play, a dramatization by Margaret Sharp of her novel "The Nutmeg Tree," is not in itself very much, as it is neither particularly well written nor at all times psychologically believable, but at least it gives Miss George an opportunity, in fact a series of opportunities, to display her charm, her vitality, her variety, her comedy, her pathos, her Rabelaisian humor. Under the skilful direction of Antoinette Perry she repeats her triumph of "Personal Appearance." In fact in all that matters "Lady In Waiting" is Miss George, even though she has an excellent supporting cast, including a new English actor named Alan Napier, who looks like Anthony Eden. Mr. Napier is distinguished, suave, and possesses charm. Other good performances are given by Ethel Morrison, Leonard Penn, Stephen Ker Appleby, and Michelette Burani, while Carol Curtis-Brown is effective in a scene of tears. But to return to Miss George. Miss George is an American Gertrude Lawrence. Like Miss Lawrence she can carry a mediocre play by her own efforts into a success. Our eyes are always on her, eager to see what she is going to do next, and what she does next is even greater than our expectation. She acts not only with her eyes and hands and voice, but with every muscle of her body. She can put over a song or double us up with laughter or twist our hearts. She is at once an actress and a personality. Brock Pemberton deserves well for having first discovered her for us in "Personal Appearance" and for having brought her back in "Lady In Waiting." *(At the Martin Beck Theatre.)*

Ladies In Retirement

THIS IS a play which breaks every rule of the horror-mystery school and yet remains absorbing. It is slow-moving, we know who the murderess is, the victim we get to like enormously. By all precedent the play therefore should be a flop. Yet it is one of the most interesting works of the season and ought to be as great a hit in New York as it was in London. Edward Percy and Reginald Denham have produced a drama which is well written, with a story which, once you have swallowed the initial premise, marches inevitably to the end. The horror comes naturally out of the characters and the situation; there are no clutching hands, moaning voices, or unexplained episodes. Miss Flora Robson makes her American début as the murderess, and proves herself an actress of uncommon power who also gives the impression of intellect and imagination. What a Lady Macbeth she would be! Miss Isobel Elsom as the flighty ex-Gilbert-and-Sullivan singer is a magnificent foil. It is a pity it could have been only for a single act! Equally admirable in their own ways are Evelyn Ankers as the maid, Estelle Winwood and Jessamine Newcombe as the two queer sisters, Florence Edney as the nun and Patrick O'Moore as the scoundrelly cockney nephew. "Ladies In Retirement" is an interesting play perfectly given. *(At Henry Miller's Theatre.)*

GRENVILLE VERNON.

Jane Eyre Again

IT IS MY GOOD FORTUNE to have seen David O. Selznick's excellent production of *"Rebecca"* before I read Daphne du Maurier's novel. Not being forewarned, I sat spellbound from the opening sequence ("Last night I dreamt I went to Manderley again") in which the camera glides into the deserted estate now reclaimed by Nature, through incident after incident that reveals the secrets of this Cornish manor, to the finale in which fire, after all passion spent, leaves a desolate shell of grey walls. After reading the book, I realized that the film owes its success mainly to Miss du Maurier's carefully devised, sweet-girl-graduate romance, faithfully made into a screenplay by Robert E. Sherwood and Joan Harrison, and to Alfred Hitchcock's superb direction. This direction captures for the screen the thrilling feeling of expectancy, suspense and remembrance of things past. This direction and good castings are responsible for what seem like brilliant performances: Joan Fontaine as the shy, gauche, pretty but not beautiful, nail-biting, foolish heroine whose awkwardness changes through suffering into poise; Lawrence Olivier rising to the requirements of his best scene in which handsome, fortyish Maxim tells his young wife about Rebecca while the camera moves restlessly about the room and practically brings to life a woman whom you never see; Judith Anderson, white-faced, black-gowned, as Mrs. Dancers whose chilling hand keeps alive an evil influence in a house pervaded by Rebecca. Those who know the story will miss the element of surprise so important to the plot, but they will have the pleasure of seeing an intelligent cinemization of a love story, from the school of the Brontës, which has not been altered for children.

"Claudine" is the kind of film that only the French could or would make. Serge de Poligny directs Colette's simple, gay story with understanding directness, subtlety and an exactly correct lack of ostentation. Fresh, winsome Blanchette Brunoy plays the lead with such sincerity that one is quite touched by problems of adolescence in a girls' school. Perhaps Claudine is too mischievous and knows too much for her sixteen years. But so has she read too much. Although she is wise enough to reject the advances of Miss Sargent, she is not experienced enough to avoid getting a crush on Aimée or on the handsome young doctor. Well, she learns her lesson and wipes away her tears with "at my age, what *does* it matter?"

Albert Dekker as *"Dr. Cyclops"* won't exactly keep you awake nights, but this diabolic scientist will give you a thrill when he succeeds in reducing people to about one-fourth their sizes. Imagine stepping up to a cat or chicken with a scissors blade as a spear! Nothing much comes of all this in the way of plot, but the technical devices and the excitement of the little people's escape should hold your interest. For some strange reason this bit of fantasy is in Technicolor.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

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Growing Their Own

By EDWARD SKILLIN, JR.

THERE IS SOMETHING unhealthy in the concentration whereby one-fifth of one percent of all industrial corporations hold 52 percent of the nation's corporate assets. Even more unwholesome is the pass to which so many Americans have come—millions of unemployed, other millions mere cogs in a vast impersonal economic machine. Many American families are in fact so demoralized that they are no longer able even to amuse themselves. Seven years of public works and other New Deal pump-priming plus exaggerated war preparations and foreign munitions orders still leave millions of Americans impoverished and insecure. This sort of thing has been said before and it is well summarized in the introductory chapters of a new book* that gives a real inkling of one thing that can be done to rehabilitate American family life.

The book raises the question, for instance, why the average American potato should travel 741 miles from earth to oven. Why should the American farmer have to raise and sell enough wheat for 1,120 loaves of bread in order to buy 70 loaves at his local store? In view of the latest scientific advances, why is it that yields per acre in the United States do not compare favorably with those of European countries, or even with American yields of fifty years ago? Worst of all there is the growing class of landless rural proletariat—the victims of one-crop farming, depleted soils, dust bowls, share-cropping and loss of foreign markets. In fact, "Rural Roads to Security" is the most damaging analysis of our agricultural system imaginable.

On the other hand there is a sound constructive method of restoring family life. Homesteading is a highly acceptable means. It involves production of a great variety of things at home—milk, butter, eggs, cheese, fruits and vegetables, poultry and bacon, pickles and preserves—rather than large-scale farming for the national or international market. Crops for family consumption, including feed for stock, come first; cash crops, though necessary, are subsidiary. Intelligent diversification replaces short-sighted, one-crop farming; rotation and natural fertilizers from livestock build up the soil. Unlike their cousins in the city, children on this type of farm become a genuine economic asset. The 160-acre Iowa corn-hog ranch, for instance, is replaced by the 40-acre family farm.

A variation of this—the part-time farm—situated near mine, factory or other place of employment, can be much smaller (5 to 10 acres, say), for wages supply the necessary cash. It is recorded that employees who can fall back on their own produce can hold out indefinitely for just wages and decent labor conditions. The part-time farm is one point where the homestead program advances into industrial territory, since it makes possible the operation of small factories in smaller centers, and thus contributes to the sound decentralization that is essential for the nation's rehabilitation.

The symbol of this general way of social regeneration is the cow. In another sense it is the substitution of fertile soil for unyielding city pavements. The relief sector is an indication of how it works. It is estimated that the average Iowa relief family has cost the public authorities $3,000 in the past seven years. Thank Heaven, husband, wife and children are still alive and in fair health, but economically and in morale they are worse off today than they were in 1933, and relief payments must continue. If the $3,000 had been used to settle them on the right type of subsistence homestead, the larder would today be stocked with all sorts of good and nourishing things to eat. Moreover, the family would be ready right now for an energetic course of plowing and planting. But the important thing is not to harp on past mistakes; it is essential to start afresh. It is late, but not too late.

Production at home is an important part of the homestead scheme. It involves not only the growing and preserving of fruits and vegetables for family use, but also milling and baking, weaving, sewing and woodworking and other "lost" domestic arts. Here again children are also an economic blessing. The mechanical advances of recent years make farm and home work less and less drudgery. Yet the small, domestic type of machine develops a sense of resourcefulness and self-reliance completely lacking in the average factory worker.

Stability is another important feature, which enables rural and formerly urban families to make the most of cooperative buying and marketing organizations and sound agrarian educational facilities. The social waste of moving every year or two is eliminated. Well-planned ownership means security, responsibility, and interest in the local community and its problems. It provides the materials and disciplines for the Christian sense of the family fully to develop. No recurring fear of dispossession paralyzes healthy ambitions to go forward. The wholesomeness of agrarian family life, close to the soil, is indisputable.

That this is no utopian dream is demonstrated by the authors, who cite King City, Ontario; Granger, Iowa; the Borsodi productive homes; St. Teresa's Village, Alabama; the Nova Scotia cooperatives, and others. There is ample evidence that it works. But the homestead program requires experienced planning, energetic and intelligent carrying out. Urbanites of farm origin and young people are the best prospective resettlers.

Happily the Department of Agriculture is beginning to show preference for familistic economy rather than export subsidies or crop control as the real hope for the American farmer. Huge soil conservation and other benefit payments to agricultural corporations, life insurance companies and other absentee landowners are still the order of the day. But the authorities are beginning to move in the other direction.

"Back to the Land" is more than a wishful slogan for the solution of America's domestic ills. It is developing into a realistic and well-defined part-time and subsistence farming program that should have the support of every socially-minded American. It should be a major concern of public

*Rural Roads to Security. Monsignor Luigi G. Ligutti and the Reverend John C. Rawe, S.J. Bruce. $2.75.

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and private colleges and universities in all sections of the country. After reading "Rural Roads to Security," it is difficult to think of the successful application of the principles of the encyclicals, the reconstruction of the American social order, or the saving of American Democracy in other terms.

More Books of the Week

Three Whithers

Spiritual Values and World Affairs. Sir Alfred Zimmern. Oxford. $3.00

The Organic State. Ross J. S. Hoffman. Sheed & Ward. $1.50.

The New World Order. H. G. Wells. Alfred A. Knopf. $1.50.

THE author of each of these books attempts to give us a diagnosis of the world's ills. These are but three of a type of which there are many and of which there no doubt are more to come. Not that anyone should deplore the number of panaceas and solutions coming from the pens today; most of them are sincere attempts to enlighten the darkness that surrounds us. Here and there in most of them one finds fragments of truth which when pieced together may give us a pattern. One may even find grains of truth in the periodic reflections of H. G. Wells. These three authors have taken a long look at the suffering patient, the world. They have all agreed that it is sick. They have all agreed that something must be done. Sir Alfred Zimmern would have "spiritual values penetrate the whole of life"; Ross Hoffman offers Italy as a model to every state; and H. G. Wells being angry at many things, particularly the Catholic Church, offers a world socialist order founded evidently upon all the guaranties of nineteenth century democracy.

Sane thinkers might well agree with most of what Sir Alfred writes, but there is a kind of haziness about his use of the term, spiritual values. It is not that sentimental feeling that tickles the ribs of the ultra humanitarian. Such phrases, however, as: "We apprehend them [i.e. spiritual values], or we do not apprehend them; and this apprehension, this reaching out, is a reaching out not of the intellect but of the soul. . . . What I want to bring out is the distinction between the intellect and the soul. . . . To identify the spiritual with the intellectual is to mix two separate forms of experience. . . . Spiritual values, apprehended by the soul, are outside the boundaries and limitations of time. They are both the *quality* and the *notion* of the Divine which permeates every movement of life, if we allow it to do so." From this it is not altogether clear whether Sir Alfred knows what he means either by intellect or soul or spiritual values. When we read further that there has been too much intellect in present times exercised in the solution of social problems and international relations, we may be excused at least a wee, small dissent. When Sir Alfred comes out of the initial confusion and gets to the main thesis of his book, which in part is a lecture to the Archbishop of Canterbury to leave material details of international affairs to men who know international affairs, not to jump to conclusions, and not to form moral judgments until all the facts are at hand to justify them, he reminds one of the simple Aristotelian proposition that politics is a pragmatic science, not a science of the ultimate, and that while statesmen have been too careless in the application of ethics, moralists have been in the immediate past too much concerned with the bare machinery of politics. It is a valiant attempt to define the things that are Caesar's and the things that are of God, with a condemnation of the modern neglect of the latter.

Ross Hoffman sees all those signs of weakness in the democratic order which have been proclaimed from hundreds of rostrums and from the pages of thousands of books for the last twenty years. As a result of these signs of weakness, "We experience the birth pangs of a new political organism, a new state process of creation by the great national societies that have arisen in the last century." The Italians, however, above all have pointed the way to the best state for our times—an order in which (quoting Mussolini) "the people are the body of the state and the state is the spirit of the people . . . the people are the state and the state is the people." In case Signor Mussolini's statement is not enlightening, Professor Hoffman explains: "Hence the term totalitarian state has meant the full incorporation of the Italian people into one political body, not only physically, legally and objectively, but spiritually and subjectively; so that no member of the state stands as it were apart from it or is conscious of an opposition between it and himself." Despite the fact that we have in this book as intelligent a defense of fascism (the organic state) on the Italian model as one can find anywhere, yet it is not attractive. Mr. Hoffman makes as valiant an attempt as Rousseau ever did to show that although the individual—somehow still equipped with natural rights—disappears into the mass and moves with it, he remains as free as before. Mr. Hoffman does recognize that the Italian theory of the state "widens the road to tyranny. And were the régime to fall under the influence of fanatics and heretics . . . then all the precious things which men of Christendom hold dear would be exposed to easier attack." That is exactly the danger. That is what all too often happens (as in Germany) when power is concentrated to create a mystic unity which quickly overshadows the individuals which compose it. We judge political forms not only by what they are but what they tend to become. And the tendencies of fascism, even in Italy, run toward an ever-increasing regimentation of a defenseless people at the hands of a crafty, if enlightened, despot.

As to Mr. Wells, he does not like the war. He does not like the Catholic Church which, we learn with some surprise, influenced the British and French in the "fantastic" blunder of defending the "impossible Polish state and its unrighteous acquisition." Nor does he like the present British government of Mr. Chamberlain. Nor does he like capitalism. Nor does he like world federation. Nor does he like Communism. Is there anything he does like? Is there anything he wants? Yes. He wants the coming World Order to present an "immense and increasing constructive activity." Men will be engaged in attacking all the social and political evils that have infested the world of today. They will attack bad housing, maldistribution, disease, waste of world resources. The reward will be the usual materialistic paradise. Beyond that his world is a void. No one can quarrel with Mr. Wells's desire for a better earth even if it faintly resembles a nineteenth century utopia. Granted its full realization in Mr. Wells's time, I wonder if even Mr. Wells's would not find Something missing.

JEROME G. KERWIN.

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CRITICISM

Preface to World Literature. Albert Guérard. Holt. $3.50.

THIS is a much more significant book than its somewhat unfortunate title suggests. To most of us "World Literature" is dismally if irresistably synonymous with five-foot shelves and kindred devices for capsuling culture. Actually Mr. Guérard, who is professor of general and comparative literature at Stanford, is concerned with the facts that Mr. Mortimer Adler and others are also facing—that we are all agreed on the necessity of keeping in touch with the great tradition of the humanities, which Arnold called the best that has been said and thought in the world, and that most of us are pretty puzzled as to how to go about doing it. Thus for the second time within a month we are presented with a distinguished treatise on how to read a book intelligently and with enjoyment. I like almost everything about it except the title.

"Preface to World Literature" is at once humble and courageous: humble because its author prefers being helpful to being brilliant, courageous because he dares examine the stock notions and terms which we have remembered from our courses in literature well enough to use them volubly so long as we are not pressed to say what they mean. We are glib about "taste" and style, Romanticism and Classicism, Realism and Symbolism; we prate about *genres,* "literature and society," the problems of criticism. To define them is a more serious and easily deferred matter. That Mr. Guérard can discuss them reasonably in chapters rich with a long reading experience and much careful thought testifies both to his knowledge and his critical tact. His guide is that most dependable of critical tools, common sense, which he dignifies with the name of pragmatic relativism.

Thirty years ago this month, in the preface of "The New Laokoon," Irving Babbitt wrote of comparative literature: "Many people are inclined to see in the popularity of this new subject a mere university fad. They will not be far wrong unless it can become something more than an endless study of sources and influences and minute relationships." Mr. Guérard is practicing comparative literature in its larger sense. For him, "World Literature" consists of the great books of the West, those which can pass national boundaries, which do not lose their meaning in translation. He admits that he does not know an infallible list of the books. But he feels that any of us, once awakened, can find his own great books and, by reading them carefully and employing the commonplace critical concepts as aids to rather than escapes from thinking, emerge from the process visibly richer than we went in.

I am sorry that I have not been able to read his book as he meant it to be read, with intervals between the chapters to contemplate a bit and browse among some of the hundreds of good books he mentions. No reviewer can. Having said this I may insist that while I like his book, I do not have to agree with his judgments. I am suspicious of a process of identifying poetry by detecting "this high potential of emotion . . . a tremor a sympathetic vibration within ourselves," and of recognizing a book of cultural value by the "sense of inner growth" it gives me. We vibrate to too many things in this age, and our inner feelings are too turbulent to be trustworthy. But please notice that my willingness to disagree, this awareness to literary problems, is exactly what Mr. Guérard

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wanted to stir up in me as a reader, and is a small measure of the success of his book.

It is a part of what is probably the most significant educational trend of our generation. At Chicago, Columbia, Swarthmore, Saint John's and two dozen other colleges around the country a real effort is being made to re-establish contact between young Americans and the great tradition. Manuals and anthologies are being abandoned in favor of reading the important texts themselves, "studying not English literature but literature in English," as Mr. Guérard puts it. We are seeing the folly of reading books about books. "Preface to World Literature" is not one of these. It is designed to send us to the books themselves. W. M. FROHOCK.

Selected Letters of Edwin Arlington Robinson. Macmillan Co. $2.50.

MR. RIDGLEY TORRENCE and his collaborators, in making this selection from Robinson's letters, have been guided by a desire to present their deceased friend not as poet or critic or correspondent, but as the man he was, as a human being. They have succeeded. In these talkative and quite un-selfconscious letters to intimate friends, there is presented a self-portrait of the poet beyond the competence of biographers. There is nothing very literary about any of the letters; in fact, what literary opinions are expressed are perfectly conventional, or else unimportant. This, doubtless, is occasioned by the method of selection.

There is something at once pathetic and noble about Robinson's life. It was the life of a man with a single aim. In the course of his correspondence, the reader cannot fail to sense the privations and downright human want Robinson experienced because he would be a poet and nothing else in a country and an epoch which had not much use for poets. He tried hard to be other things; novelist, playwright, willing worker; but these things were not in him. "Tristram" and success came late in his life to a man, not embittered, but weary and discouraged. J. G. E. HOPKINS.

PHILOSOPHY

The Problem of Matter and Form in the "De Ente et Essentia" of Thomas Aquinas. John Goheen. Harvard. $2.00.

IN TREATING of the ultimate principles of corporeal substance, Saint Thomas sometimes identifies potency and act with matter and form and sometimes with essence and existence. The student is thus confronted with the following problem: If matter is not the same as essence and if form is not the same as existence, what does Saint Thomas have in mind when he predicates potency of both the matter and the essence of a corporeal substance and act of both its form and its existence? This is the problem which Mr. Goheen attempts to solve in the present study. He calls attention, in the course of his analysis, to certain texts from the "De Ente et Essentia" in which Saint Thomas maintains that form is embraced by essence, and that form, thus embraced, is potential to the act of existence. From this the author concludes that the Aristotelian concept of form has met with severe modifications at the hands of Saint Thomas—that form is no longer conceived as act proper, but as act only in a relative or comparative sense.

The problem dealt with here is both difficult and important, and honest attempts to solve it should not be lightly rejected. Nevertheless it should be pointed out that Mr. Goheen's conclusion involves a univocal conception of act, and is, for this reason, inadmissable. Like all else in the Metaphysics of Saint Thomas, act is conceived analogously, that is to say, the concept, by its very nature, undergoes a partial change of meaning with each new reference. Hence it is in no sense contradictory to maintain that form is act proper, and existence also.

D. DALRYMPLE.

RELIGION

The Sublime Shepherdess. The Life of Saint Bernadette of Lourdes. Frances Parkinson Keyes. Messner. $2.00.

A SAINT'S life written by a novelist reaches a public seldom attracted by hagiography. Because of the popularity of Frances Parkinson Keyes's other books, many readers will meet Bernadette Soubirous, the little saint of Lourdes, for the first time in "The Sublime Shepherdess," and they will meet the real Bernadette, a generous, intelligent, young woman; she, who has been the despair of hagiographers, becomes in the novelist's pages what Father Herbert Thurston called her, "a very human saint." Mrs. Keyes wrote at the Clinique Bernadette at Lourdes, not far from the grotto where our Lady appeared to the fourteen year old peasant girl and confided to her, in the child's own patois, *Que soy era Immaculado Counceptiou,* "I am the Immaculate Conception." Other portions of the biography were written at Nevers after chats at the Convent of Saint Gildard with elderly Sisters. A pleasant intimacy informs the narrative, a familiarity with Bernadette's daily round, with her simple unassuming goodness, her humility and self respect, her love of her family, her gaiety, her genius for *le mot juste,* her occasional impatient outbursts, her horror of being exploited, her matter-of-fact attitude to the supernatural experiences that were never to be repeated after her fifteenth year. The apparitions are less adequately dealt with than the characterization—especially that of March 25, 1858, should have been differently stressed—but Père Cros and other authorities on Lourdes and its mysteries have recounted these. Mrs. Keyes wisely portrayed not the many wonders of Lourdes, but the saint who was wont to say that, had there been a poorer, more ignorant child than Bernadette Soubirous, that child would have been chosen by our Lady as her envoy; she has shown that lowliness in a saint is due to intelligence, and that humility, as the great Saint Teresa knew, is merely a just estimate of oneself.

DAISY H. MOSELEY.

Abba: Meditations based on the Lord's Prayer. Evelyn Underhill. Longmans. $1.00.

PRAYER comes from God and, through His creature, goes back to Him, completing the circuit of reality. The great moments of this divine-human movement are all exhibited in the Prayer of Our Lord: selfless adoration, cooperation with the redeeming action, complete subordination to God's methods and designs, confident dependence, filial penitence, trust in His prevenient care, all of which elements rest upon our status as "sons and daughters of the Eternal Perfect." This very objective view of God—"higher than my highest, yet nearer than my inmost part"—gives to prayer the qualities of a permanent personal participation in the perfect action and being of God. A remarkably bracing draught, this little book. R. F.

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TRAVEL

The Mexican Earth. Todd Downing. Doubleday. $3.00.

WHAT headlines it would have made if Zapata and Villa, instead of their firing squads, had torn out their victims' hearts as sacrifice to their ancient gods! But not only are rifles and walls much handier than pyramids and altars, but it would seem that overt enthusiasm for Toltec deities is less apparent in the native population than in the American-Mexican intelligentsia, who are convinced that Mexico's chief curse is her Christianity. The propaganda, initiated by the Calles government in favor of "pre-Columbian" culture—they prefer not to call it primitive—has become popularized with the tourists. Anita Brenner's "Idols Behind Altars" elaborates the pronouncement of the anthropologist, Dr. Manuel Ganio, that out of Mexico's fifteen million Catholics, only three million are *bona fide* Church members. Mr. Downing, however, is fair enough to admit that, after making the difficult pilgrimage to Nuestro Señor de Chalma, he could not discover any outward evidence of pagan cults although he could "sense" their presence. A Father Servando José de Mier y Guerra is quoted as saying in the last century:

> It ill befits the Spaniards to reproach us the sacrifices which were less than three hundred years old when they *adored* as holy for six centuries the inquisition which, in forty years in Spain alone, immolated *four hundred thousand* victims.

As there are no references in "The Mexican Earth," it is not possible to trace the source of this quotation with its stupendous figure. We only know that in the worst decade of the Spanish Inquisition under Torquemada, two thousand unfortunates were burned—about two hundred a year—and that at a famous auto-da-fé in Valladolid on May 21, 1559, a scant fifteen suffered. Certainly these were fifteen too many, but daily on the great Teocalli in Mexico City, at least thirty prisoners must have been sacrificed, as to give the annual number of sacrificial victims as 10,000 is to cut one estimate in half. And not even Torquemada "adored" the Inquisition.

Mr. Downing has a warm and most commendable affection for the Mexican Indian, but seems to discount the fact that the Spanish colonial families have been in Mexico now for four hundred years, which gives them a longer claim to being native sons than the best of our American patriots. There is no more doubt but that the great landlords once exploited the peons than that the labor government now exploits the former land holders. Ruthless confiscation of any property without compensation is dangerous. According to Tannenbaum, the result of Calles's agrarian policy was that 4 percent of the peons gained 2.64 percent of the land of which 30 percent of the best property went to the foreigners. Under Cardenas the Indians have the land, but what is land without means of tilling and planting it?

"The Mexican Earth" is neither guide book nor history and lacks index and bibliography. It is written in journalese. As Mr. Downing was a guide, he knows his Mexico and loves it. He also knows the kind of information that the average tourists finds savoury. It is obviously the extra package on that great summer trek to Laredo and Vera Cruz. But for tourist trade only. The only thing not cheap about it is the price.

E. V. R. WYATT.

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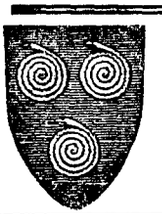

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The Inner Forum

TEMPS PRÉSENT publishes each week a summary of the activities of the young French Catholics who have formed groups in Paris and throughout France to support the action of the magazine and to carry on a Catholic action of their own. The war is the climate in which they work and it is heartening to see from the short notes which announce their meetings, from the appeals for help, something of the unaltered Christian motivation they are successful in maintaining. Here are a few appeals from soldiers: no names or addresses; just a number—the loneliness of war.

7. Who could send a clarinette to a stretcher bearer who wishes to entertain his comrades during the endless evenings of waiting? Or a flute.

18. A Signal Corps sergeant would like to receive books of Mauriac or Maritain for a group of friends who are trying to keep their minds in working order.

27. A priest at the front asks that immediate help be organized for the family of one of the men in his platoon.

There are announcements too from the Provinces:

Sainte Etienne: Saturday Meeting: Refugees from Lorraine were present. Plans made for assisting them by friendship and by introducing them into the homes of local members.

Bordeaux: Dialogue Mass. The Archbishop will be present at the meeting afterward.

And here is how men on short leave from the army passed a Sunday with their friends of the Paris group—there were two hundred and fifty of them:

Father Maydieu on leave from the front arrived during the night and said Mass in Notre Dame at eight. The group broke fast in the house of the Franciscan Missionary Sisters. At ten a Dominican Father defined theologically the position of Mass in relation to spiritual life. After a short organization meeting Father Allo, the historian, discussed the origins of the Mass in the New Testament and in the early ages of the Church. At half past twelve lunch. Then came a lecture by a Benedictine on the Canon of the Mass, a lecture on the Oriental Liturgy, another on the non-Roman Latin Liturgies (the Ambrosian, Mozarab, Dominican, Carmelite and that used in the city of Lyons). A last discussion on the true way of assisting at Mass, and the day ended with Vespers and Benediction.

CONTRIBUTORS

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